



EDITORIAL

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Lawyering and AI: Developing a Library Exhibit Aimed at Law Students

Transformative technology for law

“Law students must also be able to assess outputs or work products created by AI tools that can produce draft memos or briefs, correspondence to clients, contracts, information summaries, timelines, and more. Even when students rely on AI to support their work, their professional reputation is on the line if they fail to check, assess, or correct what it produces.”

Among the fields where artificial intelligence (AI) tools are having an impact is the legal profession, and law librarians are positioned to help law students understand, assess, and make use of relevant AI tools during their time as law students. Law librarians can also help law students develop skills in, and recognize the implications of, using AI options that will be part of their new work environments once they formally begin their legal careers.

One way of capturing law students' attention that emphasizes key features of generative AI tools while also highlighting some key implications of using such tools in the legal profession is through an exhibit. Exhibits can provide a simple and effective way to engage audiences and convey information. Past exhibits at the MacMillan Law Library have focused on topics as varied as useful study aids for law students, the origins and functions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, significant Fifteenth Amendment cases, and the Dowd Report and Pete Rose.

Law students must learn about AI and the practice of law for several reasons. As attorneys, they will need to be able to weigh the costs and benefits of relying on AI tools to help them with their legal research and writing. Such tools can help them work efficiently, but they may also produce results that are inaccurate, irrelevant, or otherwise not to be relied on. It is important to introduce students to the risks of using AI while they're still in law school, so they can recognize potential pitfalls early in their careers. Law students must also be able to assess outputs or work products created by AI tools that can produce draft memos or briefs, correspondence to clients, contracts, information summaries, timelines, and more. Even when students rely on AI to support their work, their professional reputation is on the line if they fail to check, assess, or correct what it produces. Not only will future attorneys need to navigate the complexities inherent in using AI tools but supervising attorneys will also expect them to be able to use and understand generative AI tools. With these issues in mind, a law library exhibit offered a way to engage students while highlighting key issues at the intersection of lawyering and AI.

Background: Exhibits at the MacMillan Law Library

Emory University's MacMillan Law Library spans five floors and includes reading areas, print stacks, study rooms, collaborative spaces, archives, staff offices, and a reference desk (Engsberg, n.d.). Near the library entrance on the main floor is a display case, visible to users as they enter or move between floors.

Over the years, the display case has hosted a wide range of exhibits, including exhibits about topics broadly connected to the law, the study and practice of law, and Emory University's School of Law and Emory University. The mission of the Law Library is to "support fully the scholarly pursuits of the faculty and students of the College of the Law," and one part of that mission includes sharing information with the law school community, particularly students--something exhibits help accomplish (Director's Welcome, n.d.).

The lockable display case has dimensions of 47 inches wide by 47 inches high, with a slat-wall at the rear that allows creators to configure exhibits using a wide variety of shelving and stand combinations (MacMillan Law Library, 2023). Any objects used as part of an exhibit, including posters, books, photographs, and more, are visible—but not accessible—to library users, as they remain behind a locked glass façade. Librarians at MacMillan who create exhibits for the display case have a wide range of options available to them with respect to the types and sizes of materials they can use. Sarah Rodgers, Law Librarian for Outreach and Programming at the MacMillan Library, provides fellow Librarians who are interested in creating an exhibit with a Display Case Guide that includes suggestions for layouts, along with photos of past exhibits, both to highlight how information was presented in previous exhibits and to showcase different possible configurations. The Guide includes layout suggestions with photos of past exhibits, tips for using Canva to create visual materials, and descriptions of shelving and riser options. It also outlines Emory's primary and secondary color palettes, highlights elements that make exhibits engaging, and explains the exhibit creation process—including printing logistics (MacMillan Law Library, internal document, 2023).

Project Goals

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an increasingly important topic across a range of settings and workplaces (Gillain, 2024; Bornet et al., 2025). Opportunities, benefits, and risks that arise with the use of AI tools are particularly important for legal practitioners and law schools, in part because AI tools are changing how attorneys conduct their work (Criddle, 2023; LexisNexis, 2023; Chatterjee, 2023; Lester, 2023). In response to the emergence of AI tools that are directly relevant to law students preparing to enter the practice of law, the Research Services Unit at Emory's Law Library began planning for an exhibit starting in the summer of 2023 with the broad aim of tackling the topic of AI tools as they apply to attorneys.

The author's research into how law firms are adopting, or deliberately avoiding, AI tools helped shape the exhibit's goals. News stories about attorneys getting into trouble for relying on AI without verifying its output also served as inspiration.

Some specific goals for this project included highlighting pitfalls or problems associated with using AI to conduct legal work (including legal research), providing real-world examples about the consequences of relying on AI, and offering an overview of ways in which AI tools are currently being used by law firms. Another aim of the exhibit was to highlight how law firms and judges have responded to the use of AI tools by attorneys.

Because the display case is regularly refreshed with new topics and materials, this exhibit also aimed to introduce something visually and thematically distinctive. By varying the subject matter, presentation style, and types of resources on display, the exhibit helped position the Law Library as a “trustworthy, surprising, delightful space” (Owens, 2019, 17).

An additional goal, and a broader goal for having exhibits within the library curated by librarians, is to showcase librarian knowledge about a topic relevant to law students. By demonstrating familiarity with a range of different issues relevant to attorneys, legal scholars, the law school, and the law school community, librarians at MacMillan can “market” their expertise in a way that connects to the work that they do when they provide reference desk support, research consultations, in-class workshops, and when they teach advanced legal research classes to law students (Barr, 2016). Allowing librarians to develop a case exhibit is a useful exercise. Creating an exhibit allows MacMillan librarians to deepen their expertise in substantive areas, practice using tools like Canva, and refine their skills as communicators and community members. Such exhibits also help to make a library space welcoming and engaging to users, they foster conversations and learning, and they highlight the many ways in which the library carries out its mission.

Project Approach and Methods Used

The exhibit evolved over several months before installation. The author began by emailing the Law Library’s Head of Access Services in August 2023 to request approval for an exhibit on AI and lawyering. That initial message contained a brief overview of proposed plans for the exhibit, to include “information geared toward students about what law firms will expect regarding use of AI in the workplace [and] what some of the pitfalls are to using AI...[the] focus would be on AI and legal practice...” (A. Quinn, personal communication, August 16, 2023). After receiving approval, the author was contacted by the Law Librarian for Outreach and Programming, who shared a draft guide about creating an exhibit and an offer to meet to discuss the next steps in putting it together. In September 2023, the author followed up with workflow questions and asked for feedback on combining images and text in the exhibit. Based on that feedback, the author began compiling a list of quotes and excerpts about AI and lawyering into a single document. When it became evident that there were far more quotes and examples than could fit into the display case, the author went through several rounds of narrowing the list of potential sections of text for the exhibit, including examples of attorneys relying on AI-created case law and programs instituted by law firms to train their attorneys on AI tools.

One early version of the exhibit would have presented only textual information without any accompanying images. That draft underscored the need for visual elements to create a more engaging and dynamic display. This need was reaffirmed after reviewing past Law Library exhibits, many of which effectively incorporated different colors, images, objects, varied fonts, and other design elements to spark passerby interest and convey key bits of information without overwhelming library users with text-heavy information.

Another step early in the exhibit creation process involved meeting with the Outreach and Programming Librarian, who presented various options for setting up the display case. Those options included stands, backdrops, fabric swatches, varying poster sizes, information about past exhibits, and installation tips. At this same meeting, the Outreach and Programming Librarian also demonstrated how to use Canva to create and size exhibit materials, including how to copy templates from past displays.

Gathering and Selecting Examples of the Impact AI Tools Are Having on the Legal Profession

To gather relevant information, the author conducted research on how AI is used in legal settings, including how firms train attorneys to use it, how bar associations and judges have responded, and what risks arise when lawyers rely on AI in their work. The author used a variety of materials to conduct research, including legal news sources, law firm blogs, and legal databases featuring recent articles and content about AI and its impact on the profession. The author compiled more than twenty-five examples of how attorneys use AI, but space constraints limited the final selection to fifteen. The author winnowed the information to fit the display case; the final selection included examples of attorneys misusing AI, firm-led training programs, ethical considerations, shifts in legal workflows, and tasks attorneys now complete using these tools.

The information and materials to be presented in the display case were never intended to be comprehensive; instead, the selected examples were intended to provide an overview of some key issues related to the use of AI tools that would ideally spur law students to learn more about both the tools themselves and the implications of using them. One way to address the spatial constraints of the display case was to provide users with a QR code that provided a list of written materials they could use to read more about AI and the legal profession.

Using Canva to Create Visual Content for the Exhibit

While working on the text component of the exhibit, the author was granted access to Canva Pro through the Law Library's institutional account. Canva is a graphic design platform that offers a range of tools to create visual content; the upgraded version, Canva Pro, allows users to incorporate more tools than free Canva accounts do, but limits access to five users per institutional license. By building out exhibit components within Canva, it was possible to use a template that was correctly sized for the back, left, and right sides of the display case. The central panel of the exhibit, which included a header titled "Lawyering & AI," could have maximum dimensions of 48 inches high by 48 inches wide.

Because the focus of the exhibit was legal practice and AI, the author experimented with Canva's AI generator to create whimsical "attorneys" and "judges" using detailed prompts. For example, the prompts "lawyer in courtroom with giraffe head and purple suit" produced a variety of images matching that description. Not only did the images created with Canva's AI generator tool include whatever elements the author selected, but the resulting images were also sufficiently unusual and eye-catching that they were likely to capture student attention and draw them to the exhibit. Because

Figure 1
AI-Generated Legal Characters Showcase Challenges that Accompany New Tools



visibility and engagement were key goals, Canva proved to be a very useful tool. Each AI-generated figure was paired with a speech bubble created using Canva elements. The total exhibit included fifteen text excerpts (most one sentence long). The central panel featured nine AI figures, and the two side panels—each 32 inches high by 15 inches wide—displayed three AI-generated figures each.

Figures 1 and 2 show examples of the AI-generated imagery and corresponding text from the exhibit.

Results, Lessons Learned, and Ideas for Getting Input on Future Exhibits

The exhibit was installed on November 7, 2023, and remained in place until mid-January 2024. Although MacMillan does not

record the number of exhibit viewers, several students were observed engaging with the display. As a result, measuring the exhibit's success proved challenging. Future exhibits could include a QR code for users to submit feedback or questions and to explore additional resources related to the exhibit. An inexpensive tracking device could also help quantify engagement.

In the months after the exhibit was displayed, Emory Law students formed the Law and Artificial Intelligence Society, with the stated goal of preparing law students for using AI in the workplace (Emory University School of Law, n.d.). It is unclear whether the exhibit directly inspired the group, but its timing highlights growing student interest. Future AI-focused exhibits could include students from the Law and Artificial Intelligence Society in their creation. Regardless of the topic of a future exhibit, inviting input from other law school students, staff, or faculty during the exhibit planning process could generate buy-in, bring in fresh perspectives, and foster a sense of community (Sorrell et al., 2017). To reach a broader audience, future exhibits could also be shared via the Law Library's website, the law school's online repository, or on a relevant law school webpage.

Having a template with the dimensions of the exhibit case and guidance from the Law Librarian for Outreach and Programming were essential to the exhibit's success. Not only did the Law Librarian for Outreach and Programming provide detailed guidance about how to set up an exhibit that would work in the given space but she also helped enhance the appearance of the exhibit by making it have more visual impact and a coherent aesthetic, such that the final version included pop art elements and a unified visual theme. For example, the yellow fabric placed just below the exhibit echoed colors used in the AI-generated images from the exhibit itself, and the background featured Ben-Day dots, in a nod to Lichtenstein's pop art style (Kimmelman, 1997). These design choices supported the exhibit's core goal: to be both eye-catching and informative.

Figure 2

AI-Generated Figures Highlighting Legal and Ethical Implications in Law Practice



In the months since the exhibit was installed, the Research Services unit at MacMillan has offered workshops to law school classes on using AI tools in leading legal databases, highlighting the limitations and potential challenges of those tools. A new LibGuide on AI, the law, and the legal profession is also in development. In addition, the Law and Artificial Intelligence Society continues to organize “opportunities for student-led discourse, fundraisers, and speaker events” to better understand AI’s role in the legal sector and in society (LAISE, 2025).

Key Takeaways

The following key takeaways emerged from the planning, design, and implementation of the Lawyering and AI exhibit.

- An exhibit about a complex topic need not be formatted in a way that is dry or unengaging. Using images can be an effective way to avoid creating a text-heavy exhibit.
- An exhibit need not be comprehensive to be effective. It can identify key issues in a way that, ideally, inspires users to continue learning about that topic.
- In the future, including faculty, staff, and students during the exhibit creation process could allow the library to build new connections to the law school community while also helping it tailor exhibit content to address user needs.

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